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MARYLAND

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2003

November 10, 2010

Lt. General Charles Bolden (Ret.)
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E Street, SW
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Administrator:

I have reviewed your letter and the report of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) Independent Comprehensive Review Panel led by John Casani. I appreciate the high level of attention that JWST is now getting.

To my dismay, the Casani report found poor management, inadequate cost analysis, and lack of adequate budgeting for risks as root causes of JWST's cost growth. NASA must have a sense of urgency and frugality to correct the management and oversight deficits while presenting a realistic budget and project plan. We cannot afford to continue with business as usual in this stark fiscal situation.

I asked for this review because I was alarmed by reports of problems and escalating costs. Unfortunately, the report validates my greatest concerns. The Webb telescope will now cost \$6.5 billion, \$1.5 billion more than the estimate included in NASA's February 2010 budget request. Its launch will be delayed by over a year, from June 2014 to September 2015.

I am committed to space-based astronomy. Like the Hubble before it, the Webb telescope has the potential to rewrite our science books. Building this telescope, 100 times more powerful than Hubble, is an awesome technical challenge. I was heartened that the Casani panel found JWST to be technically sound and vital to scientific advancement. But we cannot let its scientific potential blind us to the continual pattern of cost growth. Simply put, we are not in the business of cost overruns.

I appreciate your initial response to begin to manage the project more aggressively. However, I will repeat again, the management and budgetary reforms you detail must have a greater sense of urgency and frugality.

Again, thank you for your personal attention to this important project.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations